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Gender Differences and Similarities in Moral Orientations:

A Narrative Approach to Moral Socialization Within the Family

By

Susan M. Hilbers

Bachelor of Arts, University of Windsor, 1993

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Some research suggests that adults as parents, in particular, may orient their moral reasoning and socialization of children differentially by gender (Lollis, Ross, & Leroux, 1996; Pratt, Arnold, & Hilbers, 1998; Pratt, Golding, Hunter, & Sampson, 1988). The present study investigates the extent to which mothers and fathers differ in their moral orientations with respect to socializing young children, specifically in their use of a narrative or storytelling mode. The present study also examines the extent to which gender of the child influences the orientation of parents' socialization narratives told to and about their young children. Thirty married couples, whose first child was approximately four and a half years of age, participated in this study. Two personal narratives were obtained from both parents at separate times. The first narrative involved discussing a family story about an event from the parents' childhood when he or she had learned an important value. The second narrative involved each parent completing a value choice task and then providing a narrative on a teaching or socialization experience with the child, following the procedure of Pratt and his colleagues (1998). Consistent with previous findings (Pratt et al., 1998), the results revealed that mothers were somewhat more likely than fathers to express stronger levels of care in these narratives, although this finding was only marginally significant ($p < .06$). Furthermore, mothers and fathers were quite different in the patterns of care expressed to their sons and daughters. Specifically, fathers were significantly more likely to consider justice issues in their narratives regarding their sons than their daughters, whereas mothers did not differentiate by child gender. This finding is consistent with the gender socialization literature, in which fathers are more gender-differentiated in socializing their children than are mothers. The present study highlights the practical usefulness of this narrative technique in studying value socialization within a family context. Future research is needed to further examine what role gender and narrative play in the development of moral thinking.

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Moral Socialization Within the Family

In her controversial book, *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan (1982) has criticized and challenged Lawrence Kohlberg's (1969) well-known theory of moral development. Gilligan argued that Kohlberg's theory of moral development emphasizes a justice perspective, but fails to capture the true extent of a care perspective in everyday moral reasoning. A justice perspective, according to Gilligan, refers to a focus on the rights of the individual, fairness between persons, and a valuing of individuality in making moral decisions. A care perspective, on the other hand, refers to a focus on interpersonal relationships and a connectedness with others when making moral decisions. Thus, the justice approach considers rights, autonomy, fairness, equality, rationality, and respect for authority as primary issues in moral reasoning, whereas the care perspective considers hurt, response, understanding, relationships, and interdependence as central issues in moral reasoning. Gilligan asserted that women impose a "distinctive construction on moral problems, seeing moral dilemmas in terms of conflicting responsibilities" (1982, p.105), rather than in terms of abstract notions of equality and conflicting rights. These two perspectives or "voices," justice and care, have been identified by Gilligan as representing the 'male voice' and the 'female voice,' respectively.

Many researchers agree with Gilligan's assertion that these two orientations exist, but whether these two moral voices are gender-specific or even gender-related remains controversial (Garrod, Beal, & Shin, 1990; Pratt et al., 1988, Study 1; Walker, 1989; Walker, 1995). Some research suggests that adults as parents, in particular, may orient their moral reasoning and socialization of children differentially by gender (Lollis, Ross, & Leroux, 1996; Pratt, Arnold, & Hilbers, 1998; Pratt et al., 1988). The present study investigates the extent to which mothers and fathers differ in their moral orientations with respect to socializing young children, specifically in their use of a narrative or storytelling

mode. The present study also examines the extent to which gender of the child influences the orientation of parents' socialization narratives told to and about their young children.

The following introduction provides an overview of the research on gender differences in the moral development domain. The beginning of the introduction highlights the diversity among scholars in the understanding and definition of 'morality'. The introduction also examines the literature on gender differences in moral stage, as well as gender differences in moral orientation.

What is Morality?

A continuous problem in the field of moral development, as in many other areas of psychology, is lack of agreement on the definition of morality. The Swiss child psychologist, Jean Piaget (1932/1948) argued that: "All morality consists in a system of rules, and the essence of all morality is to be sought for in the respect which the individual acquires for these rules" (p. 1). Similarly, Kohlberg (1984), one of the most seminal contributors to the field of moral development, proposed that morality centers on issues of justice. He argued that children and adults at different ages make moral judgments based on conceptions of justice, "with the highest and most worthy level based on principles of contractual agreement among people about proper interpersonal behavior, about universal equal rights among all people, and about the overriding value of human life" (Thomas, 1997, p. 8). Piaget, Kohlberg, and others, have elevated a single virtue, in this case justice, as centrally important in the moral sphere.

In contrast to Piaget and Kohlberg, some theorists (Baumrind, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Ward, & Taylor, 1988; Noddings, 1984) asserted that the development of morality is different for males and females, with males' moral considerations emphasizing justice, and females' moral considerations emphasizing care (Thomas, 1997). For example, Gilligan (1982) argued that in most cultures women are primarily responsible for the care of children, whereas men take on the responsibility of maintaining and administering the wider society. She argued that this division of labour places women in

orientations of the two sexes. Therefore, a woman's conception of morality is more likely to be based on caring for others and "centers around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the [male's] conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 19). This perspective, and that of others (e.g., Bakan, 1966), emphasizes a central duality of moral virtues in human life.

Morality has also been defined as "voluntary actions that (at least potentially) have social or interpersonal implications and that are governed by some intrapsychic mechanism. Morality is a multifaceted phenomenon which, of necessity, entails the interplay of behavior, thought, and emotion" (Walker, 1995, p. 84). Most recently, Thomas (1997, p. 10) provided an all-encompassing, 'multi-value' view of morality:

> From each individual person's perspective, the moral domain comprises all values that the person accepts as guides (a) to ways people should treat each other and (b) to ways people should act toward nonhuman features of the environment (animals, plants, inanimate objects) and (c) toward supernatural forces in which the person believes (gods, cosmic powers, spirits of ancestors).

By 'multi-value,' Thomas means that morality is not limited to a single virtue that a person should pursue, such as Kohlberg's justice focus. Instead, moral behaviour encompasses many equally valid moral principles and values, such as honesty, courage, justice, compassion, and many more. Thus, the focus of the moral domain may change throughout development across the life span (Thomas, 1997).

The foregoing definitions illustrate the diversity in the understanding of what constitutes morality, as well as the range of core conceptions within this domain. Research in the moral development domain reflects this diversity, with most scholars emphasizing only what they believe is relevant to their theory while ignoring other

aspects not incorporated in their theory. This wide range of focus is quite important to the controversy discussed below.

Gender Differences in Moral Stage

As noted above, Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning has been one of the most influential theoretical frameworks to guide research in the study of moral reasoning (e.g., Kohlberg, 1981, 1984). More specifically, Kohlberg, following the work of Piaget (1932/1948), hypothesized that individuals' moral judgments develop through a naturally occurring and hierarchically-ordered set of six stages. Kohlberg's, as well as Piaget's, conception of these moral stages is centered on individuals' developing a sense of "justice," moral judgments based on principles, fairness, rules, and rights (Lyons, 1983). Kohlberg's six stages divide into three levels: preconventional (focusing on the needs of the self; stages 1 and 2), conventional (concerned with approval from others in society; stages 3 and 4), and postconventional (based on personally chosen principles in which the good is formulated in universal terms; stages 5 and 6). By analyzing males' responses to hypothetical moral dilemmas, Kohlberg's longitudinal research has provided much evidence and support for his claims of a progressive stage sequence and reorganization of moral thinking in development (Colby & Kohlberg, 1984, 1987).

However, critics of Kohlberg's stage theory (e.g., Gilligan, 1977, 1982; Kittay & Meyers, 1987) have argued that women's care-based moral thinking may be overlooked and devalued due to biases in Kohlberg's scoring system. Gilligan argues that Kohlberg's scoring system tends to assign care-oriented moral judgments to lower stages (Stage 3), and justice-oriented moral judgments to higher stages (Stage 4 or higher). Despite Gilligan's criticisms, however, few studies have found support for her claim of gender differences in *stage* levels of moral reasoning due to scoring bias. In fact, research has shown that when various background factors (e.g., education, occupation, political and social activity) are controlled, males and females tend to score at equivalent stage levels on average in the Kohlberg system (Walker, 1995).

Though there is little evidence of stage differences between the sexes on Kohlberg's (1969) measures (Lifton, 1985; Walker, 1984), this criticism was only one part of Gilligan's (1982) argument. More generally, she argued that males and females may differ in their "orientations" to understanding morality. Gilligan (1986) summarizes her claims of moral orientation as follows: (1) justice and care are distinct moral orientations - i.e., two frameworks for organizing people's thinking about what constitutes a moral problem and how to resolve it, (2) most people in describing a moral problem and its resolution primarily focus on one orientation and minimally represent the other, and (3) the direction of focus of one's moral orientation is associated with gender (see Walker, deVries, & Trevethan, 1987).

Based on data from numerous studies (Barnett, Quackenbush, and Sinisi, 1995; Donenburg & Hoffman, 1988; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Lyons, 1983; Pratt et al., 1988; Rothbart, Hanley, & Albert, 1986; Walker et al., 1987), there is some support for Gilligan's first claim of two distinct moral "voices." Findings also support her second claim that males and females use both moral orientations, with the use of one orientation typically more predominant than the use of the other (Walker, 1995). However, it is less clear that individuals are *consistently* likely to use one orientation over time or across different dilemmas. In fact, many researchers contend that few people exclusively or consistently use one orientation over the other (Pratt et al., 1988; Rothbart et al., 1986; Walker, 1986; Walker, 1995; Walker et al., 1987). However, it is Gilligan's third claim that moral orientation is gender-related that ignited an ongoing controversy within the field and led to many studies attempting to elucidate the role of gender in moral development (Donenberg & Hoffman, 1988; Ford & Lowery, 1986; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Langdale, 1986; Lyons, 1983; Pratt, Diessner, Hunsberger, Pancer, & Savoy, 1991; Pratt et al., 1988; Walker et al., 1987; Walker, 1989). The following review of the

empirical research on gender differences in moral orientation attempts to clarify the findings reported to date on this ongoing controversy.

Review of Empirical Research on Gender Differences in Moral Orientation

Researchers have employed three different methods to investigate this gender difference in moral orientations as posited by Gilligan (1982). Gender differences in moral orientation have been studied using (1) real-life dilemmas, (2) standard hypothetical dilemmas, and (3) participants' ratings of the two moral "voices." The following exhaustive review of the literature focuses on these three methods and summarizes the empirical research on gender differences in moral orientation.

Studies Employing Real-Life Dilemmas. One method researchers have used to investigate gender differences in moral reasoning involves real-life dilemmas. Real-life dilemmas have been generated "by asking people how they defined moral problems and what experiences they construed as moral conflicts in their lives" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 3). Lyons (1983) was one of the first researchers to use real-life dilemmas to investigate moral orientations from both men's and women's discussions about their own personal experiences. She developed a coding scheme to identify both justice and care moral orientations as defined by Gilligan. Eighteen males and 18 females were interviewed, ranging in age from 8 to 60+, and results indicated that 67% (n=12) of the women oriented their moral judgments toward a care perspective and 61% (n = 11) of the men oriented their moral judgments toward a justice perspective, thus providing some support for Gilligan's central claim of gender-related moral orientations. Lyons concluded that this gender difference was not absolute, nor were the two moral orientations mutually exclusive. In other words, individuals often used both orientations when discussing real-life moral dilemmas, but one orientation was typically predominant.

Donenberg and Hoffman (1988) examined the findings reported by both Lyons (1983) and Gilligan (1982) that the two moral voices are gender-related, but are not exclusively used by one gender. Using both real-life and hypothetical dilemmas,

Donenberg and Hoffman interviewed 69 children and adolescents and employed Lyons scoring method to code their participants' responses. The results supported the contention that two distinct ways of thinking about moral issues exist and that these two moral voices are differentially related to gender. Girls emphasized the care voice significantly more than the justice voice (Donenberg & Hoffman, 1988).

Similar to Gilligan's (1982) and Lyons' (1983) findings, Gilligan and Attanucci (1988) supported Gilligan's original claim that women predominantly focus on care reasoning when considering moral dilemmas, whereas men predominantly focus on justice reasoning. Using real-life dilemmas from 46 males and 34 females, primarily adolescents and young adults, Gilligan and Attanucci conducted three studies investigating the extent to which men and women differ in raising concerns about justice and care issues in discussing personal moral conflicts. Results revealed that the participants were inclined to use both orientations in their moral thinking, but one orientation was usually predominant. Overall, men were more likely to use justice reasoning in their dilemmas, whereas women were more likely to use care reasoning.

Pratt and his colleagues (1988, Study 1) provided partial support for Gilligan's (1982) argument that women tend to use the voice of "care" when considering moral issues. Pratt et al. investigated gender differences in moral orientation in a sample of adults (ages 18 to 75) using both real-life and hypothetical moral dilemmas. The results from the real-life dilemmas indicated that, across the entire sample, men were significantly more likely than women to orient their responses toward a justice perspective, and women were more likely than men to orient their judgments toward a care perspective. However, significant gender differences in moral orientations were only found for the middle-aged sample of adults, and not for the young adult sample or the oldest adults.

In a second study, Pratt et al. (1988, Study 2) used real-life moral dilemmas to investigate whether parental status could be directly associated with moral reasoning

differences in men and women. Using a sample of 20 married adults with children and 20 married adults without children, the researchers found significant gender differences in moral orientations only among the adults who were currently parenting children. No significant gender differences were found in the nonparent sample. Pratt et al. (1988) interpreted their findings within Gutmann's (1975) parental imperative theory, suggesting that adults' experience of active parenting may encourage them toward greater gender differentiation during this phase of the life cycle. These results are consistent with the findings reported by Walker (1989) and Walker and his colleagues (1987), who observed these same gender differences in real-life moral orientations only in their adult (specifically parental) sample, but found no differences in their child and adolescent samples.

Thus, although some support exists for Gilligan's (1982) claim of gender-related differences in moral orientations, some researchers have concluded that these gender differences do not appear to be as pervasive or extensive as Gilligan originally hypothesized (Pratt et al., 1988). For instance, Walker et al. (1987) employed 80 family triads (mother, father, and child; N=240) to examine gender differences in moral orientations. During personal interviews, the researchers obtained parents' and children's discussions about both hypothetical and real-life dilemmas. Dilemma issues were scored for moral orientations. The researchers observed that people recalled two different types of real-life moral dilemmas: personal and impersonal dilemmas. "Personal" moral dilemmas (also referred to as 'interpersonal' moral dilemmas) represented those concerning a specific person or group of people with whom the participant had a significant relationship of a continuing nature (e.g., a family member, close friend). In contrast, "impersonal" moral dilemmas represented those focused on a person or group of people whom the participant had not known well, or who was not specified or was generalized (e.g., students, clients), or involved institutions (e.g., police), or involved an issue primarily intrinsic to the self. These two dilemma types, interpersonal and

impersonal, have generally been linked with the care and justice moral orientations, respectively.

Results for the real-life dilemmas indicated that adult women were more likely to present personal moral dilemmas which emphasized care considerations, and adult men were more likely to present impersonal moral dilemmas, which focused on justice considerations (Walker et al., 1987). There were no such gender differences for children or adolescents. Dilemma content, however, was free to vary in these real-life reports of recalled dilemmas. Despite gender differences when content was not taken into account, Walker and his colleagues reported that when the personal versus impersonal nature of adults' real-life dilemmas was controlled, no gender differences in moral orientation remained. Several other studies have reported similar findings regarding dilemma content and orientation of real-life reasoning in adults (e.g., Pratt et al., 1988, 1991; Skoe & Diessner, 1994; Walker, 1989; Wark & Krebs, 1996).

For example, Wark and Krebs (1996) investigated the effects of personal and impersonal real-life moral dilemmas on moral orientation using a sample of 110 undergraduate students, half male and half female. The students were asked to recall and describe two moral conflicts they had experienced, one that did not directly involve them (impersonal dilemma) and one that directly involved them and another person or persons with whom they had a significant relationship (personal dilemma). Results indicated that the personal real-life dilemmas elicited the most care-oriented reasoning, with females making significantly more care-oriented moral judgments than males. The researchers also found gender differences in the different kinds of real-life moral dilemmas reported by the students. Specifically, females were more likely than males to report prosocial types of dilemmas (e.g., reacting to conflicting demands or to the needs of others: honesty versus keeping a secret, torn between divorced parents, whether or not to help a criminal friend, or whether or not to return to a husband threatening suicide), whereas males were more likely than females to report antisocial types of dilemmas (e.g., reacting

to transgressions or temptation: theft, assault, infidelity, cheating). The researchers reported that all gender differences in moral orientation were eliminated when the type of personal real-life dilemmas was controlled.

Several studies have also provided contrary or weak evidence for Gilligan's claim of gender differences in moral orientation in reasoning about real-life dilemmas (Rothbart et al, 1986; Walker, 1989). Rothbart and her colleagues (1986) collected protocols from interviews with 50 college students, half of whom were men and half women. Results indicated that, from the real-life protocols, males and females did not differ significantly in their use of justice or care moral reasoning. Similarly, Derry (1989) interviewed 20 male and 20 female managers who described situations of moral conflict within their work environment. Results revealed that, of the participants who described a moral conflict at work, all but one used predominantly a justice orientation, thereby precluding any gender differences.

Walker (1989) conducted a longitudinal study with a large sample of 233 participants, ranging in age from 5 to 63 years. Employing real-life and hypothetical dilemmas, Walker reported finding relatively few gender differences in moral orientation for either type of dilemma. Specifically, there were no gender differences among children and adolescents on either dilemma type, and none was found for any age group on the hypothetical dilemmas. However, the only gender difference reported was among the adult sample of parents on the real-life dilemma, a finding consistent with the results obtained by Pratt and his colleagues (1988). Women were found to use more care-oriented reasoning than men for this dilemma type, but again this was due to the greater recall of interpersonal dilemmas by women.

In summary, there is some evidence from real-life dilemma recall procedures in support of Gilligan's (1982) gender difference claim regarding the use of justice and care moral orientations. However, overall, it appears that gender differences in these real-life orientations are found primarily among mid-life adults, and such differences are primarily

dependent on dilemma content differences. Women tend to discuss personal relationship dilemmas, which elicit more care considerations, whereas men tend to report dilemmas of an institutional, impersonal nature, which evoke more use of justice considerations.

Studies Employing Hypothetical Dilemmas. Traditionally, standard hypothetical moral dilemmas have dominated the research paradigms assessing moral development (Walker et al., 1987). Hypothetical dilemmas have typically been used, particularly in Kohlberg's moral development research, by presenting people with standard moral problems and asking them how they would attempt to resolve the moral dilemma. Research on gender differences in moral orientation using this second method is somewhat less supportive of Gilligan's claim than the findings using real-life moral dilemmas (Garrod, Beal, & Shin, 1990; Pratt et al., 1988; Rothbart et al., 1986; Walker, 1989). For example, Garrod et al. (1990) investigated the use of moral orientations in children (aged 6-11 years) using fable interviews adapted from Johnston (1988). The two fable interviews allowed the researchers to examine the children's ability to resolve moral problems in both justice and care modes. Results revealed no significant differences between boys and girls in their use of justice and care. Interestingly, most children (79%) used care reasoning to resolve one or both of the fables. Pratt et al. (1988, Study 1), Rothbart et al. (1986), and Walker (1989) also failed to find gender differences in adult's moral orientations when using standard, hypothetical moral dilemmas.

Langdale (1986) reported patterns of some differences between the sexes in moral orientation on hypothetical dilemmas. Moral orientations were examined in response to two hypothetical dilemmas: Kohlberg's Heinz dilemma and Gilligan's Kathy dilemma (which focuses on whether or not to terminate an unwanted pregnancy). Langdale found a gender-related pattern; women tended to use care reasoning, whereas men tended to use justice reasoning. However, these differences were weak and not statistically significant.

In summary, although researchers have traditionally relied on standard, hypothetical moral dilemmas to assess moral reasoning in the developmental literature,

research indicates that this method has generally failed to find reliable and pervasive gender differences in adults' and children's moral orientations (Friedman et al., 1987; Pratt et al., 1988; Rothbart et al., 1986; Walker, 1989; Walker et al., 1987). It is noteworthy that some critics (Gilligan, 1982; Haan et al., 1985) have argued that the exclusive use of hypothetical dilemmas in research results in limited generalizability, since these dilemmas focus primarily on issues that may be unfamiliar, irrelevant, or constrained. As a result, hypothetical dilemmas may minimize people's identification and emotional involvement with their task of reasoning about the presented moral issue (Walker, 1988).

Studies Employing Participants' Ratings. A third method researchers have used to investigate gender differences in moral orientations involves participants' own self-ratings of their use of justice and/or care reasoning. There has been little evidence of gender differences in moral orientation using this method. For example, Ford and Lowery (1986) administered a self-report questionnaire to 202 college students (aged 18-29 years), half women and half men, on moral dilemmas or conflicts they had previously experienced. Results indicated no gender differences in the students' ratings of their reported use of justice or care reasoning in resolving any of the three moral dilemmas. Similarly, Friedman, Robinson, and Friedman (1987) presented four traditional moral dilemmas to 101 college students, and asked the students to rate the dilemmas for the importance of justice and care reasoning in resolving the dilemmas. The researchers failed to find reliable gender differences in the students' ratings on either of these types of moral reasoning. However, some gender differences in moral orientation using participants' own self-ratings have been reported. For example, in a study conducted by Galotti, Kozberg, and Farmer (1991), 186 students from three age groups (eighth graders, 11th graders, and college sophomores) were asked to rate their own use of justice and care orientations in moral reasoning, following the procedure used by Ford and Lowery (1986). The researchers found some modest gender differences; females were

significantly more likely than males to use ratings of care in characterizing their own moral reasoning, but no differences were found for justice ratings.

A more recent study employing participants' ratings provided some support for Gilligan's (1982) contention that men and women emphasize different moral orientations when considering moral issues. Barnett and his colleagues (1995) collected a total of over 600 written essays from undergraduate students, in a preliminary study as well as in a main study, concerning one specific experience that seemed most important to the students' moral development. The researchers were interested in examining students' moral orientations within their essays, and particularly students' self-ratings of which moral lessons had been learned as a result of the critical experience. Results of factor analyses revealed two separate dimensions (a justice factor and a care factor) of the students' "lesson learned" responses in both studies, supporting the notion that justice and care represent somewhat distinct moral orientations. The justice factor consisted of five lessons learned: (a) the rights of others; (b) justice; (c) the difference between right and wrong; (d) a social issue, such as civil rights, capital punishment, or protecting the environment; and (e) society. The care factor consisted of four lessons learned: (a) caring for others; (b) intimate relationships; (c) responsibility to others; and (d) friendship.

In both studies participants indicated that they had learned more of a *care* lesson from their critical experiences than a justice lesson. Only in the main study, however, were significant gender differences in moral orientation found: women reported having learned more of a moral lesson reflecting *care* from their most important experiences than did men. No significant gender differences were found in the participants' reports for having learned moral lessons reflecting justice in either the preliminary or main studies. Similar to the conclusions of other researchers (e.g., Clopton & Sorell, 1993; Friedman et al., 1987; Pratt et al., 1988; Walker et al., 1987), Barnett and his colleagues concluded that gender differences in moral reasoning are not as pervasive as Gilligan argued, but

feminine, rather than masculine, issues and concerns (cf. Galotti et al., 1991). Overall, however, most studies relying on participants' objective ratings have found very little support for Gilligan's claims of gender differences in moral orientation.

In summary, findings regarding Gilligan's claim that "justice" and "care" moral orientations are related to gender seem to depend somewhat on the methodology employed by researchers. Although investigators have traditionally relied on standard, *hypothetical* moral dilemmas to assess moral reasoning, research indicates that this method has generally failed to find reliable and pervasive gender differences in adults' and children's moral orientations. Overall, research indicates that *real-life* moral dilemmas tend to elicit more care considerations from women and more justice considerations from men. Gender differences in real-life moral dilemmas have been primarily attributed to women's, more so than men's, tendency to discuss interpersonal relationship issues when asked to describe a "moral problem" (Walker, 1995; Walker et al., 1987). Research suggests that these types of interpersonal relationship issues tend to elicit more care-oriented reasoning in the Gilligan methodological system (e.g., Wark & Krebs, 1996). Thus, most researchers now agree that men and women can potentially use both orientations, but that use of one orientation over the other depends on different contextual factors (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Walker, 1995).

Moral Socialization Within the Family

The previous literature review has indicated a complex pattern of findings regarding Gilligan's central claim of gender differences in moral orientation. To study moral socialization, particularly the conceivable parental differences in socializing moral orientations, researchers need to look to the family, since the family is most often the primary unit of socialization in the early years of life (Teevan, 1989). Moral socialization of Gilligan's two distinct moral "voices" often involves both mothers' and fathers' modeling, in their behavioural actions and in their discourse, what they believe is "right

important to investigate whether some parental gender differences are evident across childhood and adolescence. If differences are present, then the extent to which mothers and fathers differ in their socialization of moral orientations may be important to future research on moral development in general.

The next section outlines the standard theories of moral development and discusses how these traditional theories might relate to the socialization process of Gilligan's two moral orientations discussed above. The final two sections focus on an alternative *narrative* approach to studying moral socialization. Based on this narrative literature, it is argued that the use of narratives to examine socialization processes within the family deserves more extensive attention among researchers.

Theories of Moral Development: Socialization of Moral Orientations

A number of theoretical models can be applied to studying the socialization process of moral orientation within the family. As with many other fields of research, it is difficult to choose one particular theory as an explanation of every aspect of this socialization process, certainly not without considerably more research in this area. The major traditional theories reviewed below include: psychoanalytic theory, social-learning theory, and cognitive-developmental theory.

Neoanalytic models in the domain of psychoanalysis focus on early pre-Oedipal attachment relationships between mother and child as having a crucial role in the socialization process (Pratt et al., 1998; Walker, 1995). Based on the work of feminist author Nancy Chodorow (1978), Gilligan (1982) argued that moral orientation differences are derived from experiences in infancy and early childhood. She argued that because women predominantly provide primary early child care, boys and girls grow up with gender-differentiated personalities and thus experience relationships and issues of dependency differently (Gilligan, 1982). Identifying with their mothers early on in life, girls develop a sense of self that involves connectedness. Boys, however, develop a sense

of self that is separate and autonomous from their primary caregiver, since they must establish a gender identity that is clearly different from that of their mothers. These early differences in the maternal attachment relationship lead boys to develop a preference for modes of reasoning that emphasize separateness and individuation, whereas girls develop a preference for reasoning that focuses on maintaining the closeness and similarity of the maternal relationship (Gilligan, 1982). According to Gilligan (1982), the "morality of rights differs from the morality of responsibility in its emphasis on separation rather than connection, in its consideration of the individual rather than the relationship as primary" (p. 19). Despite the plausibility of her arguments, Gilligan's claims of early gender-linked socialization differences have not been explored systematically with respect to moral orientation, and these claims continue to be speculative (Walker, 1995).

Social-learning theory focuses on the importance of reinforcement and modeling in the processes of moral socialization. Research has found that many socialization agents (e.g., parents, peers, and the media) portray gender-differentiated role models for the developing child. Interestingly, some experimental studies have found that changes in these models' activities appear to have an impact on the gender-differentiation in children's own behaviour (e.g., Huston, 1983). Despite substantial findings on many areas of gender socialization, little research has explored this socialization process with respect to moral orientation. However, a recent observational study conducted by Lollis and her colleagues (1996) suggested that mothers and fathers interacted differently when intervening and addressing issues with their children during sibling property disputes. The researchers investigated the socialization of moral orientation in 40 families consisting of two parents and two young children (2 - 4 years of age), by observing parental interventions in sibling conflicts.

Lollis and her colleagues (1996) reported that mothers were more likely than fathers to intervene using care-oriented comments (approximately two-thirds of the time overall), whereas fathers were more likely than mothers to intervene using justice-

oriented comments included urging an older child to care about his younger sister's feelings and suggesting he let her participate in the play ("You know she's mad right now. She's upset. You don't like it if other kids don't let you play.") and making references to sharing ("You tell him he has to share with you or there's going to be trouble."). In another parent-child interaction, a father's justice-oriented comments included an emphasis on a general principle of equality ("You gotta get one more for Becky.") and the younger sibling's property rights ("Robby, that's Becky's."). This study seems generally consistent with the social learning perspective, indicating that parents may reinforce and thus perhaps model moral orientations somewhat differentially for children who are quite young.

Cognitive-developmental theorists, particularly Piaget and Kohlberg, argue that the development of moral reasoning is stimulated by challenging and open discussion, which in turn produces "disequilibration" of the child's current moral reasoning, leading eventually to more advanced levels of thinking. This theory holds that children acquire gender concepts naturally and universally, with the young child first labeling the self as either "male" or "female," and then eventually with age coming to realize that gender as a category is permanent and irreversible (Kohlberg, 1966). Cognitive-developmental theorists, however, have shown little interest to date in the study of gender differences, particularly with respect to moral orientation.

Of specific interest to the present study is the argument that parents play an important role in children's moral development (Walker & Taylor, 1991). However, previous research has generally ignored the importance of the family as a context for moral reasoning development, particularly within the cognitive-developmental domain (Walker & Taylor, 1991). For example, both Piaget and Kohlberg argued that parents play only a minimal role in children's development of moral reasoning. Piaget (1932/1948) proposed that "the sense of justice, though naturally capable of being

these influences, and requires nothing more for its development than the mutual respect and solidarity which holds among children themselves" (p. 190). Similarly, Kohlberg (1969) asserted that "family participation is not unique or critically necessary for moral development" (p. 399). Thus, as cognitive-developmental theorists, both Piaget and Kohlberg argued that because parents hold positions of authority over their children, they are less likely to provide optimal interactions that stimulate development (Walker & Taylor, 1991). Instead, peers and the classroom environment are believed to be best at stimulating moral development (Powers, 1988). As a result of arguments such as these, little research from the cognitive developmental perspective has focused on the importance of parental moral orientations for children's moral development. Thus, the present study is an attempt to outline the significance of the parental role in children's moral development in general, and in their moral orientations more specifically. The following two sections provide an overview of the narrative literature with regard to this socialization process within the family.

A Narrative Approach to Moral Socialization

As an alternative to traditional models, the narrative approach to socialization is gaining interest among many theorists and researchers (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Schwagler, & Rimmer, 1995; Miller, 1994; Miller & Moore, 1989; Pratt & Arnold, 1995; Pratt et al., 1998; Tappan & Brown, 1989, Vitz, 1990). In the broadest sense, "narratives are verbalized memories of past or ongoing experiences" (Heath, 1986). The narrative approach is based on the observation that "individuals give meaning to their life experiences by representing them in narrative form" (Tappan & Brown, 1989, p. 183). Research indicates that the role of narrative or storytelling in moral education has been widely used historically, and can be seen in much of everyday human interaction (Tappan & Brown, 1989). Recounting one's personal past experiences to others may also be considered a cultural universal (Miller & Moore, 1989; Miller, Potts, Fung, Hoogstra, &

occurs in diverse cultural traditions within Canada, the United States, and around the world (Basso, 1984; Heath, 1986; Miller, 1994; Miller & Moore, 1989). For example, among the Western Apache, narratives about the early history of the group serve as a socializing mechanism for transgressors. It is believed that the stories will influence the transgressors to reflect upon and correct their misconduct (Basso, 1984). Thus, an important role of storytelling is to maintain community moral values (Basso, 1984), and to instill those values in the young (Miller & Moore, 1989).

The use of narrative is also an occasion when an individual tells a moral story in the context of a 'dialogical' relationship with his or her 'audience,' and claims authority and responsibility for moral thoughts, feelings, and actions from his or her experience (Tappan & Brown, 1989; Tappan, 1991). Thus, the narrative approach to the study of moral development is primarily based and focused on conceptions of the moral self as a 'dialogical' self (Day & Tappan, 1996), a self *in relation to* others. However, in the field of moral development, the traditional cognitive-developmental approach has emphasized conceptions of 'moral autonomy' as the central aspect of human moral development. Some cognitive-developmental theorists (e.g., Piaget and Kohlberg), have characterized 'moral autonomy' as entailing behaviour that accords with moral rules, laws and principles that the individual constructs for himself or herself (Tappan, 1991). In contrast to the narrative view of self as a 'dialogical' self, the cognitive-developmental view of self has been characterized as an 'isolated' self or as an 'epistemic' subject (Day & Tappan, 1996), a self separate from others.

Much of the increased interest in the narrative approach to moral socialization has been sparked by the work of Gilligan and her colleagues (see Walker, 1995). Gilligan's (Brown et al., 1995; Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988) research has been of central importance to the development of the narrative approach to moral development and to a conception of the 'dialogical' self (Day & Tappan, 1996). Not only has this

moral dilemmas, but Gilligan's and her colleagues' work with narratives clearly documents the existence of two different moral "voices," justice and care, as reviewed above. It is widely accepted that both men and women have access to and use both "voices" when speaking, thinking, and engaging in moral discourse, as noted. The source of these two voices for the individual, however, may well lie in the history of dialogical interactions with others, perhaps particularly within the family.

A study conducted by Pratt, Arnold, and Hilbers (1998) examined the socialization process of teaching moral values among a sample of 40 two-parent families with early adolescent children (aged 12-16), who were participating in a larger study of moral socialization. The researchers interviewed both parents, separately, in their homes and asked the parents to choose the three most important moral values that they hoped the adolescent would exemplify from a list of 10 (kind and caring, fair and just, honest, ambitious, trustworthy, independent, open and communicative, polite and courteous, sharing, careful and cautious). The parents were asked to tell a narrative which described an incident during which they had tried to teach their chosen value of most importance to their adolescent. These narratives were scored for a predominant emphasis on either care or justice considerations (or a "mixed" emphasis), generally following the work of Lyons (1983). A follow-up study including 35 of the 40 original families was conducted approximately two years after the initial interviews, using the same measure. Adolescents were also asked to choose three values of most importance to themselves, from the same list of ten completed by parents, at each time of testing. Across both times of testing, results indicated that mothers were significantly more likely than fathers to express some level of care orientation in their narratives of socializing children. The researchers also found that both fathers and mothers, across Time 1 and Time 2, were significantly more likely to have told care-oriented narratives about socialization regarding their daughters

than their sons. Interestingly, parents' socialization narratives focused more on the justice mode than on the care mode overall, however.

In addition, the researchers (Pratt et al., 1998) assessed how the care orientation in parental socialization processes was linked to adolescents' actual value choices. Results revealed that only one of the ten value choices for teenagers was differentiated by child gender; girls were more likely than boys to choose "kind and caring" as an important value for themselves. Furthermore, *mothers'* emphasis on the care voice in their socialization narratives at both times of testing positively predicted both boys' and girls' choice of "kind and caring" as an ideal value for themselves. However, this finding did not appear for fathers. Since mothers', but not fathers', emphasis on the care voice was thus consistently correlated with adolescents' own value development, mothers appeared to be more influential (with regard to the moral values used in this study) in relation to their adolescents' moral self-concepts. Of course, the researchers acknowledged that the simple parent-adolescent correlations reported in this study were by no means informative regarding actual socialization *processes* in the family over time. Further research is needed on the potential differences on the presence and influence of mothers' and fathers' voices in moral development, especially with children of different ages (Pratt et al., 1998). One purpose of the present research, then, is to examine parent "voices" in the justice and care modes in family narratives with a sample of much younger children.

Narratives as a Channel of Socialization

Research indicates that narratives seem to be widely employed in the family as a means of socialization (Fiese et al., 1995; Miller, Wiley, Fung, & Liang, 1997; Pratt et al., 1998; Vitz, 1990). A study conducted by Fiese and her colleagues (1995) illustrates this widespread use of narratives within the family. The researchers found that parents tell stories about their own family experiences to young children almost universally, even to infants. Fiese et al. interviewed 91 husbands and 97 wives about the frequency and type of stories (narratives) that they told to their young children regarding their own childhood

96% of the sample discussing personal childhood experiences with their children at least occasionally.

Miller and her colleagues (1997) provide further support for the notion that narratives may be universally employed in the family socialization process. In their cross-cultural study, the researchers examined how personal storytelling functions as a socializing practice within the family context. Using six middle-class Taiwanese families and six middle-class European American families, the researchers collected more than 200 naturally occurring narrated stories of past experiences of the focal child (mean age = 2.6 years old).

Overall, Miller et al. (1997) concluded that the Chinese families were more likely than the American families to use personal storytelling to impart moral and social standards. The researchers found that Chinese families were more likely than their American counterparts to tell stories about the child's past transgressions. The researchers offered two explanations for this cultural difference. First, the Chinese families' greater frequency of transgression stories reflects a higher rate of perceived misbehaviours by these caregivers. Based on ethnographic evidence, Chinese caregivers tend to hold high expectations for their young children's behaviour, and tend to feel that they would be poor parents if they failed to teach their children proper behaviour from an early age (Miller et al., 1996).

A second explanation is that young children's transgressions were more "storyworthy" for the Chinese families than the American families. Chinese parents may be more likely to view the child's past transgressions as an opportunity for teaching rules of appropriate conduct to the child. Chinese mothers emphasized the shame inherent in misbehaviour, whereas American mothers tended to attribute misbehaviour to the child's spunk or mischieviousness. Moreover, in contrast to the Chinese parents, the American parents did not dwell on the child's misbehaviour, but used these past misdeeds as a

medium of entertainment and affirmation. Handling misbehaviour when it occurred, conducting serious discipline in private, and protecting their child's self-esteem, were all offered as explanations for the American families' tendency to downplay transgressions (Miller et al., 1997). Thus, these findings suggested that personal storytelling is routinely practiced and serves as a channel of socialization within culturally different families. The findings also suggest that this medium of socialization is in effect and functionally differentiated across cultures by the time children reach three years of age (Miller et al., 1996).

Not only are narratives widely employed within the family, but recent family research suggests that mothers and fathers tell different types of value socialization stories to their children (Fiese et al., 1995). Fiese and her colleagues reported that two distinct types or themes of narratives could be observed in stories that were told to children: affiliative and achievement themes. Affiliative themes refer to a focus on forming and maintaining interpersonal relationships or a closeness with others, and avoiding rejection. Achievement themes imply a focus on striving for success and avoiding failures. Clearly, these two themes are quite closely related to the care and justice voices of Gilligan, though they are not precisely the same. Overall, results indicated that fathers told narratives with significantly stronger achievement themes, whereas mothers told narratives with stronger affiliative themes. No differences based on child gender were found, however.

Following the procedure of Fiese et al. (1995), Hilbers (1996), in an exploratory study, investigated the use of narratives as a direct mode of moral socialization within a family analogue context, as well as studying possible gender differences in adults' moral orientations. This pilot study consisted of a sample of 64 university students (half male and half female; mean age 20), each of whom was assigned to one of two conditions: in one condition the students imagined speaking to a future 10-year-old son, in another they imagined speaking to a future 10-year-old daughter. The participants were asked to think

about and recount two occasions when they learned a lesson about "right and wrong" and to direct these stories to their hypothetical child. Results indicated a significant effect for gender of child. Specifically, "future daughters" were more likely than "future sons" to be told care-oriented stories overall. Although females were somewhat more likely than males to tell more care-oriented narratives overall, this gender of participant finding failed to reach statistical significance. Consistent with the Pratt et al. (1998) study with adolescents, Hilbers found that more of these actual stories of early experience were justice-oriented than care-oriented overall. Similar to the Fiese et al. (1995) study, Hilbers' results indicated that the narrative mode of transmission of values was readily accessed by her university participants, all of whom easily thought of and recounted two stories from their past to tell their hypothetical child. It was concluded that, despite the artificial nature of this analogue study, the results suggested that girls and boys may be socialized somewhat differently within the narrative mode (Hilbers, 1996). Obviously, however, this issue needs to be studied directly within actual families.

Other studies have suggested that mothers and fathers may be socializing their sons and daughters through narratives in different ways (Fiese et al., 1995; Fivush, 1994; Reese & Fivush, 1993) For example, narrative research (Fivush, 1994; Reese & Fivush, 1993) suggests that there are differences in how parents help their young children to recount and interpret their past behaviours. Reese and Fivush (1993) examined mothers' and fathers' styles of talking about past events with their three-year-old children. The researchers reported that parents displayed two different narrative styles, repetitive versus elaborative. The repetitive narrative style involved short, directive conversations about past events. Repetitive parents typically provided very little information about the past event. Instead they tended to cajole their child to remember by simply repeating the same questions over and over. In contrast, the elaborative narrative style involved rich and embellished information about past events. Elaborative parents provided continuous information about the event, essentially telling a coherent, detailed story about what

happened. Results indicated that use of these styles was not related to the gender of the parent, but was associated with the gender of the child. Parents of daughters were generally more elaborative than parents of sons. The researchers also reported that daughters participated in the narrative conversations more than sons, even though both sons and daughters had similar linguistic skills. Reese and Fivush concluded that parents in this study do not appear to be basing their narrative styles on their child's memory or language capabilities. Rather, the act of reminiscing about past events may be a gender-related activity.

Research Questions

This survey of the literature and review of empirical research on gender differences in moral orientations has generated several important research questions based on Gilligan's (1982) claim that there are two gender-related orientations for moral decision-making (justice versus care). This study investigates three basic, but important, questions. First, if fathers and mothers differ in their moral orientations and focus primarily on one moral orientation, as Gilligan (1982) proposes, then what effect might this be expected to have on the narrative socialization process within the family? More specifically, if fathers orient their moral reasoning toward a justice perspective in the family, it seems reasonable that their personal narratives both about and to their young children about important moral values and beliefs may be more focused on justice-oriented issues such as rights, rules, fairness, equality, individuation, and respect for authority. On the other hand, if mothers orient their moral reasoning toward a care perspective, it seems plausible that their personal narratives both about and to their young children about important moral values will be more focused on care-oriented issues such as interpersonal relationships and connectedness with others. Some research regarding older children has reported suggestive trends to this effect (e.g., Hilbers, 1996; Pratt et al., 1998).

narratives that parents discuss regarding their children? As previously noted, some recent research investigating the socialization process suggested that daughters might be more likely than sons to hear care-oriented stories (Pratt et al., 1998). These results suggest that girls and boys may be socialized differently through narrative discourse, beginning with the types of socialization stories told to them by their fathers and mothers. Based on the literature that suggests adult differences in moral orientation, it seems possible that parents may tend to discuss more care-oriented narratives with their daughters, but may tend to discuss more justice-oriented narratives with their sons, during socialization of moral values within the family. Also, based on the broader gender socialization literature, fathers tend to be more gender-differentiated than mothers in their interactions with young children (Shaffer, 1989). Perhaps this gender-differentiation also occurs during the socialization of moral values within the family, leading fathers to mark child gender differences more than mothers in the stories they tell.

Third, how early in development do parents begin to expose different types of socialization narratives to their children? Parental gender differences in type or thematic content of narratives told to children have been reported for children as young as seven months of age (e.g., Fiese et al., 1995). Pratt et al. (1998) reported that parents in their sample revealed a gender differentiation in type of moral socialization narrative about *adolescents*, such that both mothers and fathers were significantly more likely to have told care-oriented narratives regarding their daughters than their sons. However, no studies have examined gender differences in parents' moral socialization narratives about *young children*, specifically with regard to moral orientations. It seems important, then, to begin to investigate this issue further within actual family settings with young children.

The present study employed a procedure that elicited narratives that were familiar, personal, and high in emotional involvement. Although recalled from the past, the

narratives were made important by linking them to the present by requesting that parents should be teaching an important moral value to their own child.

Hypotheses

The purpose of the present study was to examine the extent to which men and women differ in their moral orientations with respect to socializing young children in the narrative mode. Two personal narratives were obtained; one involving discussions about an event when the parent, as a young child, learned an important value (Family story), and a second narrative about a time when the parent taught an important value to the focal child (Value story). It was hypothesized that differences would be found in parents' moral orientations on the two types of socialization narratives, the Family story and the Value story, both of which focus on value issues with young children. Specifically, mothers were expected to be more likely than fathers to tell more care-oriented narratives overall, whereas fathers were expected to be more likely than mothers to tell more justice-oriented narratives overall. No differences were predicted between the two types of socialization narratives. In addition, it was expected that daughters would be told more care-oriented narratives by both parents, whereas sons would be told more justice-oriented narratives by both mothers and fathers. However, it was also recognized that differences by child gender might be especially salient among fathers with these young children.

Method

Participants

Thirty married couples, whose first child was approximately four and a half years of age, participated in this study. Twenty-six families consisted of a subsample from "The New Families Project," a longitudinal study of the transition to parenthood. A sample of 73 couples was originally recruited for the project through newspaper advertisements and prenatal classes in the Waterloo region of Ontario. Four additional families, although not part of this longitudinal project, were also recruited through newspaper advertisements that specifically asked for families with first-born boys. This

addition was an attempt to even out the gender bias of the children in the New Families sample. Parents with first-born daughters (20) were more likely than parents with first-born sons (6) to be willing to participate in this follow-up. Therefore, the present study contained 20 girls and only ten boys. Many families had second and third children, all less than 4 years of age. Parents were usually in their early to late 30s at the time of this follow-up (for mothers, mean age = 32.2, range 23 - 45; for fathers, mean age = 35.1, range 24 - 53). Families were primarily Caucasian and middle-class, with one or both parents working full-time, and mothers commonly working at least part-time. Each family from the longitudinal study received $25 as an honorarium for their participation in this study. Due to difficulties in recruiting new families with first-born sons aged four and a half, the honorarium was increased to $50 in an attempt to heighten participant willingness for the last four families.

Procedure

Interviews occurred in the family's home at a scheduled time of convenience for the family. Prior to the beginning of the interview, parents received written information about the purposes of the research and the guarantees of confidentiality (see Appendix A). Parents were also asked to sign a consent form permitting interviewers to use audio- and video-tape equipment as well as to interview their child (see Appendix B). As part of a larger study, the entire interview process lasted approximately 2.5 hours. Six interviewers (five females and one male) were used in this study, as well as two additional female high school students who were needed, at separate times, to act as 'baby-sitters' for the family's children during the data collection. The larger study examined (1) parents' personal accounts of a real-life dilemma about grandparents' role in childrearing, (2) parents' reactions to a standard hypothetical parent/grandparent dilemma, (3) parents' responses to an Ethic of Care dilemma, following Skoe's (1993) procedures, (4) parents' responses to two standard hypothetical dilemmas using Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987), (5) a couple discussion on three-

general questionnaire pertaining to parenting and child-rearing issues.

Data relevant for the present study included two personal narratives obtained from both parents at separate times. The first narrative, collected at the beginning of the visit, involved discussing a family story about an event from the parent's childhood when he or she had learned an important value. The second narrative, also collected early in the visit, involved each parent completing the three-values task and providing a narrative on a teaching or socialization experience with the child, following the procedures of Pratt et al. (1998) described above.

For the first narrative, each parent, at separate times, told the interviewer a family story about an important learning experience from his or her childhood. This procedure was adapted from Fiese et al. (1995). The following instructions were read to each parent: *"We are interested in the kinds of stories which parents like to tell their kids about their own childhood. Sometimes these stories illustrate important values or points that your own child could learn. Can you take a few minutes and think about an event from your own earlier life that would illustrate an important value that you would like to teach your child about? Please tell me once you have a story in mind."* If a parent had difficulty thinking of a story, the following probe was used: *"The story could be about your family or your friends, or something that happened to you in school, perhaps. It could be about a person or an event, something important that happened to you, or maybe some time that you learned an important lesson as a child."*

For the second personal narrative, each parent was asked to complete the three-values task, following Pratt et al. (1998). This task involved choosing the three most important values or qualities, from a list of ten, that he/she wishes his/her child to exemplify, and placing these three value stickers in hierarchical order of importance on a separate sheet of paper. The following instructions were read to each parent: *"I'm going to show you a list of 10 qualities that people might think are important for them in terms*

of the kinds of persons that they want their children to become. For each quality, we've listed a short explanation of what we mean by it. What I want you to do is to look over this list, and choose three of these qualities that you think you want your child to show. Take the most important quality and stick it to the first line on your self-picture; put the second most important quality on the second line, and the third most important on the third line." Each parent was given the same list of values (and their explanations) as employed in the study by Pratt et al. (1998): polite and courteous (remember my manners wherever I am), honest/ truthful (tell the truth; don't cheat or steal from others), careful/ cautious (don't put myself in danger, so I don't get hurt), fair and just (treat all people equally; don't put people down), trustworthy (do the things I say I'll do; keep promises), ambitious/ hardworking (try to do my best in the things I do), independent (stand on my own two feet; have my own opinions even if others disagree), sharing (share things with others; don't be selfish or greedy), be open and communicate (talk to others about how I feel), and kind and caring (respond to the needs of others; listen to their problems and help them when I can).

Following the completion of the values task, each parent was then asked to discuss a moral socialization narrative (a story about a personal experience). The following instructions were read to each parent: *"Now I want you to do another thing with this page. Can you think about a time or situation when you tried to teach [child's name] about the most important value you listed for him/her, [value title]?"* If the parent had difficulty thinking of an incident for the first value, the interviewer prompted him or her to think of a time or situation using the second or third value. Parents were then asked the following two questions: *"Could you tell me what led up to this situation and what happened? How do you feel about the experience now?"*

Both narratives were audio- and video-taped and transcribed verbatim for coding purposes. Coders were blinded to the gender of the participants and gender of the child by altering transcripts and removing all names, in order to eliminate potential biases.

Narratives were coded for moral orientation on a five-point scale: "justice" (1), "justice with some care" (2), "mixed justice and care" (3), "care with some justice" (4), or "care" (5), following Hilbers (1996) and the general procedures of Lyons (1983) and Pratt et al. (1998). The primary scorer coded all transcripts. A second coder scored a sample of 15 Value story protocols and a sample of 29 Family story protocols.[1] Inter-rater reliabilities for the present study were $\underline{r}$ (13) = .96 for the Value stories and $\underline{r}$ (27) = .89 for the Family stories. The primary scorer's codes were used in all analyses. Examples of parents' Family stories and Value stories are provided in Appendix C and Appendix D, respectively. Narratives were also coded for emotion word usage and thematic content. Words expressing feelings or emotions were tallied for both of the parent narratives (see Table 5). The themes of parents' narratives were also noted and grouped into various content categories (see Table 7).

The interviewers also asked each parent the following two questions: *"How often do you tell or read stories to your child? How often do you use real-life stories like this (e.g., the Family story) to teach your child?"* After each question, the parent was asked to respond by using one of the following closest frequencies: almost never (1), once a month (2), twice a month (3), once a week (4), or most days (5).

At the end of the interviews, all participants were thanked for their participation. Families were sent a follow-up letter highlighting the purpose and results of the present study (see Appendix E).

Results

Table 1 shows the means of parents' moral orientation scores on a 5-point scale for both socialization stories. To test the hypothesis that there are differences in the moral orientations of mothers' and fathers' socialization stories discussed about their

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[1] Fewer Value story protocols were scored due to previously established inter-rater reliabilities between the two coders (e.g., $\underline{r}$'s in the 80s and 90s, see Pratt et al., 1998). All Family stories were scored by both raters as these had not been coded previously.

analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, with gender of child as the between-participant factor, and story type (Family story, Value story) and gender of parent (mother, father) as the within-participant factors. As predicted, this analysis revealed a marginal main effect for parent gender, $\underline{F}$ (1, 26) = 3.99, $\underline{p}$ = .056. Across both types of socialization stories, mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.61) generally expressed a stronger level of care than fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.17) in their stories regarding their young children[2]. There were no effects for story type, indicating that the Family story and the Value story did not differ in the level of expressed care. Interestingly, no correlations were found for the level of care considerations between parents' Value stories and their Family stories (fathers: $\underline{r}$ = -.28, mothers: $\underline{r}$ = .11). No correlations were found between mothers and fathers for the level of care considerations for the Value stories, either ($\underline{r}$ = -.20). However, there was a significant positive correlation between mothers' and fathers' level of care considerations for the Family stories told ($\underline{r}$ = .45, $\underline{p}$ = .015).

There was also a marginal gender of parent X gender of child interaction in the main analysis, $\underline{F}$ (1, 26) = 3.50, $\underline{p}$ = .073. The means indicated that the differences in the level of care expressed across both socialization stories for fathers were quite substantial regarding sons versus daughters (M = 1.75, $\underline{M}$ = 2.59, respectively), but minimal for mothers regarding their sons versus daughters ($\underline{M}$ = 2.60, $\underline{M}$ = 2.61, respectively). Follow-up repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to explore this interaction, with 2 (gender of child) X 2 (story type) as factors, separately for mothers and fathers. This analysis revealed no effects for mothers, but for fathers, there was a significant gender of child effect, $\underline{F}$(1, 26) = 6.36, $\underline{p}$ < .02. This effect, as the means above suggest, was due to fathers' expression of more care in their stories to and about daughters than those regarding sons. A 2 (gender of parent) X 2 (story type) ANOVA was also conducted

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[2]It is important to note, however, that these means reflect higher levels of justice than care, overall, since a score of 1 = justice and a score of 5 = care.

revealed no effects for daughters, but for families with sons, there was a marginal gender of parent effect, $F(1, 9) = 4.64$, $p = .06$.

Two separate, mixed ANOVAs, with gender of child as the between-participant factor, and gender of parent as the within-participant factor, were conducted separately on parents' moral orientation scores for the Value story and the Family story. For the Value stories only, (2) a gender of parent X (2) gender of child ANOVA revealed no significant effects. Although there were no significant effects, the means revealed were consistent with the hypothesis that mothers (M= 2.43) used more care in their value stories than fathers (M = 1.90) overall. Interestingly, mothers used slightly more care regarding their sons (M = 2.60) than their daughters (M = 2.25). As expected, fathers expressed more care in their value stories about daughters (M = 2.30) than about sons (M = 1.50) Overall, daughters (M = 2.27) had a slightly higher exposure to care in these stories than sons (M = 2.05).

For the Family stories only, a gender of parent (2) X gender of child (2) ANOVA also revealed no significant effects. Although there were no significant effects, the means were consistent with the prediction that mothers (M = 2.86) used more care than fathers (M = 2.45) in their stories overall. As expected, mothers used slightly more care in their stories to their daughters (M = 3.11) than to their sons (M = 2.60). Fathers also used more care in their stories to daughters (M = 2.89) than sons (M = 2.00). As predicted, daughters (M = 3.00) thus had a somewhat higher exposure to care-oriented Family stories than did sons (M = 2.30).

Table 2 shows the percentages of justice and care scores for parents' socialization stories, for both the Family story and the Value story. As shown, the clearest differences seemed to be that fathers (48%) discussed more socialization stories focusing solely on justice, overall, than did mothers (31%), but chi-square analyses revealed that this finding was not significant. Interestingly, mothers and fathers tended to emphasize more 'care

only considerations in their Family stories (32%, 25%, respectively) than in their Value stories (17%, 7%, respectively), where care considerations appeared as somewhat more of a subordinate theme (though there was no significant story type effect in the ANOVA reported above).

Table 3 shows the percentages of parents' most important values chosen as the theme for the Value socialization stories. Descriptive analyses revealed that, overall, the most common Value stories discussed by both mothers (30%) and fathers (35%) were about being "honest," a finding also reported by Pratt and his colleagues (1998). Interestingly, mothers chose "fair and just" more often as their most important value for stories regarding their sons (20%) than their daughters (5%), but chose "kind and caring" equally for sons (20%) and daughters (20%). Fathers also chose "fair and just" more often as their most important value for stories regarding their sons (20%) than their daughters (10%). However, all of the fathers' stories about "kind and caring" were directed toward daughters (25%), and none toward sons.

In an attempt to examine the choice of care-oriented values more generally, a second descriptive analysis was performed. Three of the most care-oriented values ("kind and caring," "sharing," and "openness and communication") were grouped together as one category, and three of the justice-oriented values ("fair and just," "independent," and "ambitious") were grouped together as a second category. Based on these groupings, 31% of the value socialization stories were clearly more justice-oriented, and 26% were clearly care-oriented. For the value socialization task, fathers (27%) selected slightly more care-oriented values for their Value stories than did mothers (24%), whereas mothers selected more justice-oriented values for their stories (36%) than did fathers (26%). These findings for value choice suggest that the results above for justice/care coding of the narratives, where differences tended to be observed between mothers and fathers, did not depend on the actual *content* of values chosen by the parent, but instead appear to depend on *how* the stories were told.

Subsidiary Analyses

Frequency results for parents' reports of telling or reading stories to their children revealed that, of the mothers (19) and fathers (21) who responded at all, all of the mothers and most of the fathers (76%) reported telling or reading to their child "most days," with no differences between sons and daughters. However, parents' use of real-life stories to teach values to their children were less frequent than the reading or telling of stories. Fifty-eight percent of fathers and 47% of the mothers reported using real-life stories once a week or more. Interestingly, there was a modest gender of child difference for use of real-life stories for both mothers and fathers. Of the sons (7) and daughters (12) included in this analysis, most sons heard real-life value stories from mothers only "once a month" (67%) to "almost never" (16%), whereas most daughters heard real-life stories at least "once a month" (25%) or more (75%). Real-life value stories told by fathers revealed similar findings. Most sons heard these stories "once a week" (33%) or less (67%), whereas most daughters heard real-life stories "once a week" (33%) to "most days" (50%). These gender of child patterns are reminiscent of the Reese and Fivush (1993) findings on elaboration, noted above. Unfortunately, responses from 11 mothers and nine fathers (three sons and eight daughters) were not obtained, due to recording malfunctions (2) or failure of the interviewers to ask the parents the appropriate questions (9), so these analyses are incomplete.

A content analysis was conducted on parents' moral socialization stories, to examine (1) gender differences in parents' use of emotion words in both socialization narratives and (2) the thematic content of parents' socialization narratives. Table 5 shows the percentage of parents' emotion word usage for both moral socialization stories. Emotion words included those words that had explicit reference to emotion. Both positive (e.g., happy, enjoy, proud) and negative (e.g., angry, upset, scared) feelings were counted as emotion words. Results indicated that many parents did not use any emotion words in their Value stories (40% of mothers, 73% of fathers) or their Family stories

emotion words in both socialization narratives, a 2 (gender of child) X 2 (story type) X 2 (gender of parent) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on parents' use of emotion words, with gender of child as the between-participant factor, and story type (Family story, Value story) and gender of parent (mother, father) as the within-participant factors. This analysis revealed only a nonsignificant trend for parent gender, $F(1, 26) = 2.47$, $p = .13$, with mothers ($M = .86$) using somewhat more emotion words across both stories than fathers ($M = .62$). There were no main effects for story type, indicating that neither the Family story nor the Value story was differentiated in terms of use of emotion words. There were also no effects for child gender, indicating that sons and daughters did not differ in terms of exposure to emotion words. No interactions were found in this analysis. Table 4 shows the means for parents' use of emotion words for both sons and daughters in the Family and Value stories.

Table 5 also reveals that, overall, more negative emotion words were used than positive emotion words. Interestingly, fathers used more positive emotion words than mothers used, and mothers used almost twice as many negative emotion words as fathers. It was thought that emotion word usage might be one of the cues for the care orientation in the stories. However, correlational analyses on the use of emotion words and parents' use of care for both socialization stories showed that these two measures were not significantly related. Level of emotion word usage did not relate to fathers' level of care in their Value stories ($r = .08$) nor in their Family stories ($r = .00$). Similarly, level of emotion word usage did not relate to mothers' level of care in their Value stories ($r = -.22$), nor in their Family stories ($r = -.01$).

The content analysis examining the frequency of transgression themes for both socialization stories revealed that parents often discussed issues regarding personal misdeeds and lying (see Table 6). For the Family stories, 'transgression' events, most often including parents discussing the accompanying punishment, involved doing

something they were told not to do and getting caught (e.g., playing in car causing it to go into reverse and crash, starting a fire on the stove) or misbehaving at school or at the grocery store. 'Personal achievements' included learning to ride a bike, giving up sleep for hockey practice, and being brave on the first day of kindergarten. The 'other' category for the Family stories included stories such as how smoking is 'bad,' the importance of teaching your child to turn out the light by saying 'turn out the sun,' the importance of listening to the teacher, and generosity from a stranger. It is interesting to note that parents often discussed positive experiences from their childhood, particularly with their immediate family and grandparents.

For the Value stories, many parents described situations when they attempted to teach their child about the importance of 'not lying' (Table 6). Most often the 'lying' concerned reports about hitting or biting siblings and others. However, 'lying' also included stories about a child not telling the truth about cutting his/her own hair, being malnourished when a parent was away, breaking toys and household items, and cleaning up his/her room. The 'other' category for the Value stories included stories about being careful of strangers at the park, respecting others in the house, using words instead of whining, talking out your anger, and how unfair it is that the baby stills sleeps in parents' room. Overall, there were no striking gender differences between mothers and fathers on the frequency of transgression themes in both moral socialization stories (see Table 6), nor were there differences by child gender (see Table 7).

Discussion

The present study attempted to examine the extent to which mothers and fathers differ in their moral orientations regarding socializing important values in young children using narrative techniques. Parents were asked to discuss two narratives. One narrative involved a story for the child about an event when the parent had learned an important value in childhood, and a second narrative involved a story about a time when the parent taught an important value to the child. The findings of this study tended to support the

care expressed in these socialization narratives about value issues. Consistent with previous findings (Pratt et al., 1998), mothers were somewhat more likely than fathers to express stronger levels of care in these narratives, although this finding only approached significance ($p < .06$). In particular, fathers (48%) were somewhat more likely than mothers (31%) to have their narratives scored as exclusively justice-oriented (see Table 2).

These findings suggest that Gilligan's (1982) gender-related claim regarding justice and care moral orientations is, to some extent, applicable to the narrative socialization process within the families of young children. Mothers appear to be focusing on issues of care, interpersonal relationships, and connectedness with others when discussing value issues with their young children somewhat more than fathers. It is important to note that there were no clear differences between the values and topics that parents chose for their socialization narratives. Despite the value or topic parents chose for their narratives, mothers tended to discuss more care considerations in their stories than did fathers, although this finding was only marginally significant ($p = .056$). This finding is contrary to the results of previous studies, which have found that adults' use of the justice and care moral orientations often depends on the *content* (personal vs. impersonal) of the discussed material (i.e., real-life moral dilemmas) (Walker et al., 1987; Wark & Krebs, 1996). These studies reported that when the personal ('interpersonal') or impersonal nature of adults' real-life dilemmas was controlled, gender differences in moral orientation were eliminated. However, the gender difference found in the present study (albeit marginal) did not depend on the content of the narratives. Perhaps it is the type of moral socialization narrative, which is very personal in nature, that somehow elicits more care considerations from mothers. Or perhaps it is the context of asking parents to "teach" an important value to their child that tends to elicit more care

possible gender difference.

Based on the social-learning perspective, this discrepancy in parents' moral orientation may, in fact, influence children's own moral development, beginning at a very young age. Previous studies (Lollis et al., 1996) have suggested that parents may model moral orientations somewhat differentially to their young children. By portraying gender-differentiated family narratives, mothers and fathers could be modeling sex-role 'appropriate' ways for their children to behave. An examination of the kinds of family narratives told by young children with respect to these issues might be interesting.

The findings of this study also indicated that the gender of the child may influence the types of socialization narratives that parents discuss regarding their children as well. Mothers and fathers were quite different in their level of care expressed to their sons and daughters (see Table 1). Fathers were significantly more likely to consider justice issues in their narratives regarding their sons than their daughters.Mothers did not differ by child gender Based on the gender socialization literature, fathers tend to be more gender-differentiated than mothers in their interactions with their young children (Shaffer, 1989), and may be particularly responsible for the acquisition of traditional sex-roles in early childhood. Clearly, future research is needed to further examine these issues, especially with respect to the socialization process of moral orientations.

The relation of child gender to the types of socialization narratives that parents discuss has also been reported by Pratt and his colleagues (1998), who found fairly similar results with their adolescent sample. These results suggest that boys and girls may, in fact, be socialized differently through narrative discourse, especially by fathers, beginning with the types of socialization stories parents discuss at home within and about the family. Research indicates that society places importance on boys being fair and girls being caring (Dunn, Bretherton, & Munn, 1987; Gilligan & Wiggins, 1987). Perhaps fathers concentrate more on justice issues with their sons in an attempt to prepare them

like their fathers, somewhat more concerned with issues of justice, and that girls will grow up to become like their mothers, somewhat more likely to discuss issues of care in the family context. Only longitudinal research could directly assess this developmental question.

This study also suggested that mothers and fathers begin to expose different types of socialization narratives to children (particularly boys) as young as four and a half years of age. This early exposure to differentiated moral discourse may have an impact on children's developing moral orientations, as well as their moral development more generally. Previous studies have reported similar findings, specifically regarding the content and type of general narratives with infants as young as seven months old (Fiese et al., 1995) and concerning moral orientation in stories of socialization about adolescents (Pratt et al., 1998). Nevertheless, more research is needed with children of various ages with regard to parents' value narratives to establish at what age parents may begin to differentiate their moral discourse for sons and daughters. It would seem from these studies thus far that mothers of young children may be less likely than fathers to differentiate their moral discourse, but that by adolescence, both parents may do so.

The findings also revealed that parents' moral orientations scores for their Value stories and their Family stories were not related. According to Gilligan (1982), most individuals "focus on one orientation and minimally represent the other," suggesting that people should be consistent in their use of one orientation across story types. However, in this study, parents' moral orientation scores were not found to be correlated across the two narrative types. This finding is consistent with previous research (Pratt et al., 1988; Rothbart et al., 1986; Walker, 1995; Wark & Krebs, 1996) which has found that few people exclusively or consistently use one orientation over the other. This finding also suggests that most individuals incorporate both orientations into their moral thinking and moral discourse. Further research is needed to understand how the between-gender

variations in moral orientations across personal narratives.

Although there were no specific hypotheses, the thematic content and level of emotion word usage was examined in both types of socialization narratives. Findings based on the thematic content of the narratives revealed that stories about personal transgressions and lying were the most common themes for both mothers and fathers. More positive themes (e.g., being kind to others, special memories with family and grandparents, and the importance of friends), however, were also prevalent in parents' discussions about teaching values to their young children. It is interesting to note that the gender of the child did not seem to influence the topics that parents discussed. Also, mothers and fathers did not differ substantially in the thematic content of their socialization narratives (see Table 6). These findings are somewhat contrary to the general trends of previous research (Fiese et al., 1995; Walker et al., 1987; Wark & Krebs, 1996). Wark and Krebs (1996), for example, examined gender differences in the kinds of antisocial dilemmas elicited by undergraduate students. The researchers reported that 60% of the antisocial personal dilemmas reported by males involved themes focused on violations of rules, laws, and principles of fairness, compared to only 25% of those reported by females, whereas 75% of the antisocial personal dilemmas elicited from females involved themes focused on violations of trust, social obligations, and social bonds, compared to only 35% of those reported by males. In the present sample, however, parents of both genders appeared to discuss the same types of themes about their children or their own childhoods in roughly equal proportions, whether the story was about personal transgressions or displaying care toward others. Perhaps these findings differ from the findings of Wark and Krebs because of the parental status of the present sample. It may be that discussing moral issues regarding one's children somehow increases a mother's tendency to discuss transgressional themes, or (perhaps more likely) increases a father's tendency to discuss inter-relationship themes (see Table 6). For

tendencies toward generative concern (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), which partly reflects a stronger focus on care for the next generation.

Descriptive analyses revealed that, of the parents using emotions words in their narratives, negative emotion words (e.g., upset, angry) were used more often than positive emotion words (e.g., happy, proud) (see Table 5). Interestingly, mothers used more *negative* emotion words than fathers, overall. This is noteworthy since previous research suggests that mothers' emphasis on negative emotions may help children's later emotional understanding (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991). Dunn and her colleagues reported that discussions of negative feelings were most strongly related to children's increased ability to understand and identify emotions in a standardized task, thus apparently helping children to develop explicit models of their own and others' goals, plans, and emotions (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). Examining the level of emotion in parents' socialization narratives also helps us understand what role narratives play in children learning to discuss emotional experiences. Through parental discourse, children are taught how to represent their internal states, how emotions function between people, and how emotions are expressed and controlled (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996).

The study also investigated whether parents' use of emotion words may be related to their level of care considerations in their socialization narratives. Interestingly, the findings revealed that mothers were somewhat more likely than fathers to use more emotion words in both their socialization narratives, though this effect fell short of significance. Of course, findings based on emotion word usage in the narratives revealed that many parents did not use any emotion words in their socialization stories. In addition, there was no evidence that emotion word usage was linked to moral orientation. Nonetheless, further research investigating this possible link between the care orientation and use of emotion words in narrative discourse within the family deserves more extensive examination.

daughters than to sons is somewhat reminiscent of the Reese and Fivush (1993) findings on elaborative styles in narratives. These researchers found that daughters were more likely than sons to hear elaborate (e.g., continuous, coherent, and rich in detail) narratives. The results from this study revealed that daughters may also be exposed to more socialization narratives within the family than sons. This finding suggests that parents may be exposing their daughters and sons to different types of moral and value discourse, beginning very early in childhood.

Of course, a major limitation of the present study was that it was based on an uneven number of boys and girls, and particularly, a small sample of families with boys. Parents of twice as many girls ($n = 20$) compared to boys ($n = 10$) participated in the study. Although gender of child was initially equal for this phase of the longitudinal study, for some reason, families with first-born sons tended to decline participation in this phase. Perhaps parents of sons feel more stressed and busy than parents of daughters, and the scheduling of a weeknight interview seemed too overwhelming. There was an attempt to increase the number of males in the sample, with four new families with four-and-a-half-year-old sons added to the longitudinal sample. Of course, this addition to the original sample poses a risk of potential confounds. Are these four additional families somehow different from the original sample? If so, these effects may be difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, conclusions based on this sample need to be made with caution. Obviously, future research is needed with a larger sample size, including a more equal number of boys and girls.

A second limitation in the present study involves the Family stories that were directly told to the focal child. These narratives were not analyzed for two reasons. First, for comparison purposes, the methodology of this study generally simulated that of Pratt and his colleagues (1998), which examined parents' narratives *about*, rather than *to*, their adolescent children. Second, although these parent-child story interactions were recorded

short by child interruptions, disruptive acts by the focal child or by other children, lack of interest of the focal child in sitting with the parent, or increased interest by the focal child in the audio- video equipment. Therefore, the present study focused simply on parents' initial Family stories that were audio-taped in the presence of the interviewer, prior to retelling the story to the child directly. Future research focusing solely on family socialization narratives may overcome some of the lack of cooperativeness of the children in this sample. Frequent brief visits to the family's home to acquaint the child with the interviewers and the research equipment might reduce the uncooperative behaviour, and allow for longer discussions between parent and child. These types of narratives involving the interaction of the parent-child dyad are certainly the most direct channel for investigating the actual narrative socialization process of moral values within the family.

In summary, the present study raises questions regarding the basis for some of the gender differences found in these parental moral socialization narratives. Although these gender differences were not as pervasive as Gilligan (1982) proposed, it appeared that the basis for the trends toward gender differences found in this study can not be attributed to parents' selected values, their use of emotion words, or the thematic content of the narratives. These factors did not relate to the level of care expressed in the stories. Perhaps, it is the context in which these stories were told that increased mothers' tendency to use more care in their narratives to their children. By instructing parents to tell a particular story to their child about an event or experience when the parent had learned an important moral value, it is possible that this context somehow differentially elicited the expression of moral orientations by mothers and fathers. This process was most evident for fathers talking both to and about boys, consistent with the gender socialization literature. This particular context consistently elicited lower levels of care in stories. Also, it is important to consider that perhaps the low level of gender differences found in this study are indicative of more similarities between the sexes than differences. Clearly,

more research is needed using this moral socialization narrative technique to further explore how this pattern is elicited.

The results from the present study highlight the practical usefulness of this narrative technique in studying value socialization within a family context. Gender differences, even though complex, appear to be present in the narrative socialization processes within the family. Future research is needed to delineate these differences and further examine what role gender and narrative play in the development of moral thinking.

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Mean Moral Orientation Scores for Parents' Socialization Stories

	Mothers		Fathers		
Family Story	M	SD	M	SD	n
Sons	2.60	1.78	2.00	1.49	10
Daughters	3.11	1.60	2.89	1.75	18
Overall	2.86		2.45		

	Mothers		Fathers		
Value Story	M	SD	M	SD	n
Sons	2.60	1.51	1.50	0.71	10
Daughters	2.11	1.32	2.28	1.53	20
Overall	2.36		1.89		

	Mothers	Fathers
Both Stories	M	M
Sons	2.60	1.75
Daughters	2.61	2.59
Overall	2.61	2.17

Note. The higher the score is, the greater the level of care. Overall means are unweighted.

Percentage of Justice and/or Care Used by Parents for Both Socialization Stories

Family Story Orientation	Mothers % (n)	Fathers % (n)
Justice only	29 (8)	43 (12)
Justice with some care	17.5 (5)	14 (4)
Justice/Care mixed	17.5 (5)	11 (3)
Care with some justice	4 (1)	7 (2)
Care only	32 (9)	25 (7)

Value Story Orientation	Mothers % (n)	Fathers % (n)
Justice only	33 (10)	53 (16)
Justice with some care	33 (10)	17 (5)
Justice/Care mixed	14 (4)	10 (3)
Care with some justice	3 (1)	14 (4)
Care only	17 (5)	6 (2)

Percentages of Parent' Choices of Most Important Value

Value Choice	Mothers		Fathers	
	Sons	Daughters	Sons	Daughters
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Honest/ Truthful	30 (3)	30 (6)	50 (5)	20 (4)
Fair and Just	20 (2)	5 (1)	20 (2)	10 (2)
Kind and Caring	20 (2)	20 (4)	--	25 (5)
Independent	10 (1)	15 (3)	10 (1)	15 (3)
Sharing	--	--	--	10 (2)
Polite	10 (1)	5 (1)	--	10 (2)
Trustworthy	--	--	10 (1)	5 (1)
Ambitious	10 (1)	15 (3)	--	--
Careful	--	5 (1)	10 (1)	--
Openness	--	5 (1)	--	5 (1)

Means for Parents' Use of Emotion Words For Both Sons and Daughters in Both Socialization Stories

	Mothers		Fathers		
Family Story	M	SD	M	SD	n
Sons	1.30	1.42	0.50	0.71	10
Daughters	0.61	0.85	0.89	1.08	18
Overall	0.96		0.70		

	Mothers		Fathers		
Value Story	M	SD	M	SD	n
Sons	0.80	0.92	0.70	1.57	10
Daughters	0.72	0.75	0.39	0.78	20
Overall	0.76		0.55		

	Mothers	Fathers
Both Stories	M	M
Sons	1.17	0.67
Daughters	0.67	0.64
Overall	0.92	0.66

Note. Overall means are unweighted.

Percentage of Parents' Emotion Words for Both Moral Socialization Stories

	Percentage (n)	
Positive Emotion	Mother	Father
Happy	3 (2)	9 (6)
Enjoy	1.5 (1)	1.5 (1)
Proud	1.5 (1)	3 (2)
'Feel good'	1.5 (1)	1.5 (1)
Excited	1.5 (1)	--
Negative Emotion	Mother	Father
Upset	6 (4)	6 (4)
Scared	6 (4)	4 (3)
Angry	8 (6)	6 (4)
'Feel bad'	8 (6)	1.5 (1)
Frustrated	4 (3)	--
Afraid	3 (2)	1.5 (1)
Mad	--	3 (2)
Hurt	8 (6)	--
Embarrassed	--	3 (2)
Other	7 (5)	3 (2)

Note. 'Other' category included those emotion words used by only one parent (e.g., terrified, rage, not happy, worried, guilty, 'pissed off,' 'freaked out').

Content of Parents' Moral Socialization Stories

Family Story	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Transgressions	8	7	15
Special memories with family	4	3	7
Importance of friends	4	2	6
Lying	1	5	6
Special memories with grandparent(s)	2	3	5
Fights with sibling(s) or others	2	2	4
Personal achievements	1	2	3
Take care of pet(s) and other animals	2	1	3
Be careful	1	1	2
Other	3	2	5
Total	28	28	56
Value Story	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Lying	11	7	18
Be kind to others	7	5	12
Be fair sharing toys	1	6	7
Be independent	4	4	8
Try your best to succeed	4	--	4
Be polite	2	2	4
Listen to your parents	--	2	2
Other	1	4	5
Total	30	30	60

Note. Each category is mutually exclusive.

Content of Parents' Moral Socialization Stories for Sons and Daughters

Family Story	Mothers		Fathers	
	Sons	Daughters	Sons	Daughters
Transgressions	3	5	3	4
Special memories with family	2	2	2	1
Importance of friends	--	4	--	2
Lying	--	1	4	1
Special memories with grandparent(s)	--	2	--	3
Fights with sibling(s) or others	2	--	--	2
Personal achievements	--	1	--	2
Take care of pet(s) and other animals	--	2	--	1
Be careful	1	--	1	--
Other	2	1	--	2
Total	10	18	10	18

Value Story	Mothers		Fathers	
	Sons	Daughters	Sons	Daughters
Lying	3	8	4	3
Be kind to others	3	4	1	4
Be fair sharing toys	--	1	2	4
Be independent	1	3	1	3
Try your best to succeed	1	3	--	--
Be polite	1	1	--	2
Listen to your parents	--	--	1	1
Other	1	--	1	3
Total	10	20	10	20

Note. Each category is mutually exclusive.

New Families Research Project 4.5 Follow-up

As you know, the New Families Research Project was designed to examine some of the ways in which individuals change when they become parents, and how they adjust to parenthood. The major focus of the research is on how people's thinking about things such as family life and relationships changes through this transition. The current phase of the research is particularly aimed at examining relationships with grandparents and the teaching of values to your children.

If you agree to participate in this phase of the New Families project, we would be asking to videotape you telling a story to your eldest child and to ask your child questions about the story. We will also ask you to take part in an audio taped interview lasting approximately sixty minutes, in which we would ask you about your expectations for your child's behaviour, about values you want your child to learn, about the role of your child's grandparents in their lives, and about how you deal with conflicts that might arise between you and the grandparents from time to time. We would also like to videotape a 20 minute couple discussion about getting along with parents and in-laws and about your future hopes for your child. Finally, we would give you a questionnaire to complete, which would include questions concerning your feeling about yourself, your relationship with your partner, your child, and your parents and parents-in-law. We would also like to get to know your first child a little better, so we would ask to audio tape him or her playing some word games and to have him or her draw us some pictures and answer questions about some short stories.

As a token of our appreciation for your participation, we will be paying you $25 once we receive your completed questionnaire.

Everything you say will be held in the strictest confidence, and your identity as a provider of information will remain anonymous. The transcript of your interviews and your questionnaire responses will be identified only by a code number, and all the information that you provide will be kept in a secure location. Only specifically authorized members of our research staff will have access to these records.

If there is any questions in the interviews that you would rather not answer, or feel that you cannot answer, please feel free to decline to answer and we will move on to the next question. If at any point you wish to end your participation in the interview, please tell us and we will conclude the interview. Also, if there are any questions on the questionnaire that you would rather not answer, just leave them blank.

We hope that the information about the purposes of this research and the guarantees of confidentiality will enable you to feel free to share your opinions and experiences with us. We ask you to sign the next page to indicate that you understand the purposes and conditions of participation in the research, and agree to participate.

For further information please phone Rebecca Filyer at work: 884-1970 (ext. 3265), or at home: 747-9575.

4.5 Year Follow-up Consent Form

I understand the purpose of this research, as outlined in the document entitled "New Families Research Project 4.5 Year Follow-up". I also understand that my records will be kept confidential and that I will not be personally identified on the interview transcripts or questionnaires. I also understand that I may refuse to participate in this study without penalty, and that I may choose not to answer any part of the interviews or questionnaires.

I acknowledge receiving a copy of the accompanying information page.

I give permission to have my child interviewed.

I give permission to have the interviews tape recorded.

I give permission to have the story-telling and the couple discussions video-taped.

Date: _____

Signed: _____
participant

_____
participant

_____
interviewer

The New Families Research Project
Department of Psychology
Wilfrid Laurier University

Principal Investigators:

Michael Pratt, Ed.D.
Joan Norris, Ph.D.
Mary Louise Arnold, Ed.D.

Appendix C

Examples of the Parental Family Stories Regarding Sons

Mother

When I was a little girl, my sister and I used to share a bedroom. We were close in age, we were two years apart, so we used to spend a lot of time with each other and sometimes we'd fight, sometimes we'd argue, but we were really good friends, and we could always count on each other. And at night time in the room, we'd laugh and tell stories and play pillow games and things like that. Now that we're grown up and have families of our own, we're really, really close. And it's really important to have somebody like that, [who] is really important to you in your life, that'll always stand up for you, help you with, you know when there's times that you need some help. And it's really exciting and important to have somebody in your family that you can be close to.

[Scored as Care (5)]

Father

The story is on fibbing. When I was younger, I ended up getting a watch for my birthday. I went out and played with my friends. Because the watch was tight, I put it on the handlebars and did a little bit of riding around and then I noticed it was gone. I knew I was going to be in trouble so I went home and said that someone must have taken it from me. Then we went out and started looking for it because I also said it got thrown away. It wasn't the truth, because it probably fell off or someone took it off my handlebars. The right thing to do is always tell the truth, and never say you did something when you didn't.

[Scored as Justice (1)]

When we were growing up there was an old couple who lived down the street and how my father would always have my brother and I go down and shovel their sidewalks, cut their grass, and do their yard work, as we were growing up. And the reason he did that was he wanted to teach us to respect our elders and help them. They were an old couple, they were about 75 - 80 at the time. They would come out and give us lemonade every time. That would be the kind of story I'd teach [my son], I would tell him to respect his elders.

[Scored as Justice/Care Mixed (3)]

Examples of the Parental Value Stories Regarding Daughters

Mother

Kind and Caring

Just the other day when two of her friends, who are siblings, were fighting, not getting along and upset, she chose to come home and be away from the situation. And I talked to her about staying with them and asking what was wrong, and help them find a way so they wouldn't fight. [*How do you feel about the experience now?*] Good, I would just like to see it play out - that she understood what I was saying.

[Scored as Care (5)]

Father

Fair and Just

That's a hard one to teach at this age ... she's fairly young still. The way it comes up most often has to do with toys, and who was playing with what first. The rule of be fair and how you apply the rules, that is sometimes hard. Paul [second child] is at the point now where he can take toys away from her as well. And I have to make sure that when he does that the toy is returned to her. [*Could you tell me what led up to this situation and what happened?*] What usually happens is that Paul is playing with something and as soon as he is interested in something, she is, and she wants to take it away. And if she does, he gets upset. And, of course, I ask for her to return it, because he was playing with it first. And I explain to her that you can't just take toys away from somebody. It's happened with other kids in the neighborhood too. Kids go through that. I explain to her that you can't grab something because you want it. You can ask them if you can play with it or wait 'till they're finished. [*How do you feel about the experience now?*] I don't know. It's one of those things you do daily.

[Scored as Justice (1)]

Mother

Kind and Caring

We were in Canadian Tire, and she saw a woman who was very heavy. She said very loudly, "That lady has a very fat tummy!" And we just took her down an aisle and just told her that that's not a very nice thing to say because that might hurt her feelings and you shouldn't talk about people like that. Maybe there's something wrong with her and that's why she's got the big tummy. It's not nice to say stuff like that. [*How do you feel about the experience now?*] Well, I think that what we said to her was right. I don't want her thinking that it's fun to look at people who are different and make fun of them. I think that it was good.

[Scored as Justice/ Care Mixed (3)]

Follow-up Letter

Dear Parents:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the final results of my thesis study. The study focused on differences between mothers and fathers in the ways they teach moral values to their children. In all, 30 families were used, each of which consisted of a mother, a father, and a first-born, four-and-a half- year- old boy or girl. Many families also had other children. This study specifically examined two stories about teaching your child an important value. As you may remember, the first narrative, collected at the beginning of the visit, involved discussing a family story about an event from your childhood when you had learned an important value. The second narrative involved each parent completing the three-values task (selecting three of ten 'important' values and placing the stickers on a separate page) and providing a narrative on a teaching or socialization experience with your child.

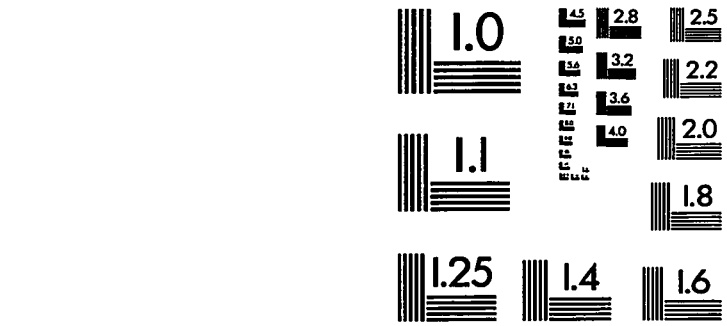
It was expected that mothers and fathers would differ in what they discussed in these stories, specifically in their 'moral orientations'. 'Moral orientation' differences between the parents were also expected depending on whether the story was told to a son or a daughter. Moral orientation refers to either a "justice" focus or a "care" focus when discussing moral issues (e.g., teaching values to your child). Studies have shown that people focusing on justice (often men) often consider moral issues in terms of values such as being fair, being independent, and not interfering with others' rights, whereas people who focus on care (often women) consider moral issues in terms of values such as being kind and caring, perserving relationships, and being open and communicative.

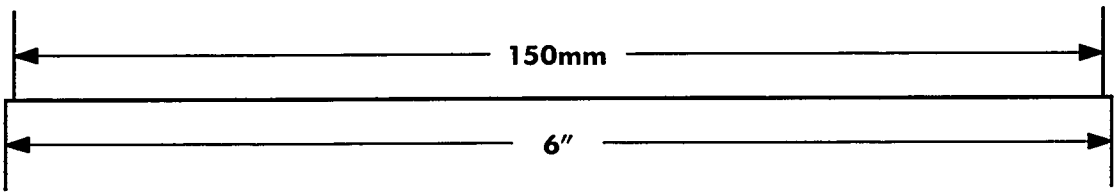
The results of this study found some support that mothers and fathers differ in regards to value stories to their children, with mothers using more care considerations in their stories than fathers, and fathers emphasizing more justice than mothers in their

stories to their sons than to their daughters, whereas mothers did not make such a distinction between boys and girls. Other studies have shown that fathers and sons often interact in special ways, that are different from other gender pairings in the family. This study suggests this may be true for the kinds of value *stories* told by fathers as well.

These findings are revealing because they show that the stories parents tell to children about values may be somewhat gender-related, even though parents are probably not *aware* of these differences. In fact, parents did not differ in the values they chose for children, but in the way that the stories were selected and told. More work is needed in this area of research and we thank you again for your help in furthering the development in moral orientation research.

Susan M. Hilbers
Wilfrid Laurier University





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